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**THE ROLE OF U.S. SPECIAL OPERATIONS FORCES
IN COUNTER-DRUG ACTIVITIES**

BY

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STRATEGIC RESEARCH PAPER

THE ROLE OF U.S. SPECIAL OPERATIONS FORCES
IN COUNTER-DRUG ACTIVITIES

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Abstract

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U.S. Special Operations Command invests a great deal of time, manpower and equipment to train Domestic Law Enforcement Agencies in conducting counterdrug operations and to assist foreign governments in their efforts to combat the production and distribution of illegal drugs.

SOF also conducts detection, monitoring and interdiction along the U.S. southwestern land border and throughout the Caribbean basin.

This paper examines the drug problem within the U.S., defines the national and military counterdrug strategy and assesses the value of this mission to SOF and their contribution to the national effort of countering illegal drugs in the U.S.

Table of Contents

	<u>Page</u>
INTRODUCTION	1
BACKGROUND	2
THE PROBLEM.	4
THREAT TO NATIONAL SECURITY.	5
SOURCES OF ILLEGAL DRUGS	6
U.S. GOVERNMENT COUNTERNARCOTICS PROGRAM	8
AUTHORITY/FUNDING.	8
NATIONAL DRUG CONTROL STRATEGY	8
ORGANIZATION	9
DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE ROLE	10
THE ISSUE: SPECIAL OPERATIONS ROLE IN COUNTERNARCOTICS.	12
AUTHORITY/DOD GUIDELINES	12
FACTORS AFFECTING MISSIONS DEVELOPMENT	13
CURRENT FORCE.	14
ROLES AND MISSIONS	15
RESTRICTIONS ON THE USE OF SOF IN THE COUNTERDRUG WAR.	21
MEASURE OF EFFECTIVENESS	23
SIGNIFICANT CONTRIBUTIONS.	24
CONCLUSION	26

Introduction

This research paper will be an assessment of the role of U.S. Special Operation's Forces, hereon referred to as SOF, in counter-drug activities. U.S. Special Operations Command (USSOCOM) invests a great deal of time, manpower and equipment to assist foreign governments in their efforts to combat the production and distribution of illegal drugs. SOF units also conduct surveillance and interdiction along the U. S. southern land border and throughout the Caribbean basin, assist law enforcement agencies (LEA) in their intelligence and interdiction efforts and train these government agencies in planning and conducting small unit operations. My assessment examines the drug problem within the U.S., defines the national and military strategy designed to counter the problem, assesses the doctrinal application and value of this mission to SOF units in terms of roles, missions and essential task lists, and reviews the command and control relationships as they currently exist. This assessment originates from an operational context and proposes that SOF's involvement in counterdrug operations are a compliment to their wartime role and mission, are doctrinally applicable, provide unique real world training value and, finally, serves our nation's needs in ways that cannot be easily duplicated by other DOD military units.

Background

"SOF are valuable instruments of national policy, because they provide an array of capabilities to meet a myriad of operational requirements."

U.S. Special Operations Forces

1996 Posture Statement The

Congress has directed that the DOD assume an active role in helping to combat the drug problem in the United States. In 1989, the SECDEF stated that "countering the production, trafficking and use of illegal drugs" was a high priority mission for the DOD.¹ This paper does not dwell in depth on the causes of the drug problem nor on the details of prevention and enforcement activities, but instead focuses on the appropriate role(s) for SOF in the national counter-narcotic effort. Special Operations Forces have unique capabilities to bring to bear, and the DOD has decided that the application of those capabilities is in the best interests of SOF and the counterdrug program. This paper examines the U. S. Special Operations Command's (USSOCOM) role in the drug war as well, since USSOCOM is chartered by Congress to develop SOF strategy, doctrine, and tactics, and its own operational vision charges it with providing "special operations support to U.S. and host nation drug enforcement activities."²

Regional instability, weak international borders, proliferation of terrorists groups and multi-national gangs makes it increasingly

difficult to control the numerous threats to our national security in areas such as illegal drugs. SOF is distinctively well-suited for the conduct of counterdrug operations OCONUS in large part, because they are regionally-oriented, culturally-attuned and specially skilled in languages. Additionally, SOF provides the nation with a force that is flexible, extremely versatile, adaptable and experienced working in ambiguous situations. The combination of specialized equipment, training and people enable SOF to span the spectrum of counterdrug operations from training host nation forces in light infantry tactics to providing patrol coastal boats for interdiction missions.³

The Problem

Whereas the overall number of drug users has decreased dramatically, from 24 million in 1979 to about 12 million in 1994⁴, the harsh realities are:

1. In 1993, Americans spent about \$49 billion on illegal drugs, 31 billion on cocaine, 7 billion on heroine, 9 billion on marijuana and 2 billion on other illegal drugs⁵.

2. Over 1 million Americans are arrested each year on drug related offenses⁶.

3. Approximately on-half million hospital emergency room visits are related to drug addiction⁷.

4. Over 25,000 people die annually because of drugs⁸.

5. Foreign governments that promote democracy and free-trade are increasingly threatened by drug-trafficking organizations which continue to corrupt their government at the highest levels⁹.

6. More adolescents are using drugs today than ever before. If this rate of use continues on its present course, it is estimated that approximately 1.4 million high school seniors will be using drugs on a monthly basis¹⁰.

7. Methamphetamine is rising in popularity, heroin is an "emerging" drug among first time users and, while overall cocaine use is down, the 30 percent (2.1 million) that are hard-core users

account for 66 percent of all cocaine consumed in the U.S. and it is these users who keep the drug business going¹¹.

The United States must continue to fight this problem through a comprehensive application of education and law enforcement. We cannot be satisfied with simply reducing drug use to manageable levels, and accepting it as a fact of life, illegal drugs tear at the fabric of our society and, if not curtailed, will continue to endanger our nation.

Threat to National Security

The drug problem is multi-dimensional, threatening the health of our people, economy, law enforcement and criminal justice system, and social and educational fabric. Drugs also have a significant impact on our national security because our national strategy requires friendly relations with other nations and seeks to foster democracy and free enterprise throughout the world¹². Unfortunately, drug production and the growing strength of drug cartels undermine friendly relations by hindering the development of democracy. Drug organizations in Latin America, for example, threaten U.S. interests by placing in jeopardy the legitimate governments of some countries. When drug organizations grow rich and provide an economic infrastructure for the poor, the legitimate governments of the Third World nations find it difficult to convince their poor populations to support anti-drug efforts. The influence of drug traffickers, with

their ties to terrorists and insurgent organizations, on governments, economies, police and military forces, and populations as a whole is indeed a form of low-intensity conflict and works to interfere with our national security objectives. The President has made it clear that he sees international drug cartels as a threat to U.S. national security¹³. It is therefore vital to our national interests to combat drug trafficking by using all available resources, such as the community, church organizations, domestic law enforcement agencies, the school systems and, when directed, all branches of the Department of Defense.

Sources of Illegal Drugs

Virtually all cocaine in the United States is derived from coca grown in Peru , Bolivia , and Colombia, with the majority of the cocaine in this country processed in and shipped from Colombia. Colombian drug cartels also control the wholesale distribution through four bulk distribution centers in and around southern California, New York City, south Texas and south Florida¹⁴. Approximately seventy percent of all cocaine shipped to the U.S. crosses our Southwestern border through Mexico. Mexico also produces much of the marijuana available for U.S. consumption¹⁵. Southeast and Southwest Asia is the principal source of opium, accounting for approximately 60 percent of

the U.S. market¹⁶. Numerous other third world countries are variously involved in the drug refining and distribution process¹⁷, such as Senegal, Thailand, Lebanon, China, Iran, Afghanistan, Burma, Pakistan, India and Laos. As the U.S. implements a national security strategy of engagement and enlargement, it is essential to recognize the impact that illegal drug production and trafficking has on our foreign policy in terms of securing our vital national interests.

U.S. GOVERNMENT COUNTERNARCOTICS PROGRAM

Authority/ Funding

The United States Government has mounted an all-out war on drugs. The current authority for this war is Public Law 100-690, passed in 1988 and commonly referred to as the "Anti-Drug Abuse Act of 1988." The Act establishes the Office of National Drug Control Policy, and provides the legal and fiscal foundation for U.S. Government participation (including the Department of Defense) in the drug war both at home and abroad¹⁸. The President's FY 1997 budget request includes a \$15.1 billion funding to fight the drug war. DOD's share is \$814 million or about 5 percent¹⁹. USSOCOM's Counter-Drug program estimates approximately 11.8 million or less than 2 percent of DOD's CD budget for FY 97²⁰.

National Drug Control Strategy

As enunciated by President Clinton in his 1996 National Drug Control Strategy, the principal goal is to continue reducing illegal drug use in America. Having dealt serious blows to the international drug cartels, reduced demand of cocaine by approximately 30 percent and increased the percentage of drug arrests and prosecutions, the President's focus for 1996-1997 is now clearly on reducing drug use by the young people of America. This current strategy, while continuing a "full court press" on supply reduction at the source and in-transit,

now reorients itself somewhat and seeks to focus on the youth gangs that distribute illegal drugs, expand the availability of drug treatment programs, opposes the legalization of drugs and energizes the commitment of state and local governments²¹.

This strategy will be implemented through five strategic goals and their accompanying objectives. The five major goals are:

1. Motivate America's youth to reject illegal drugs.
2. Reducing drug-related crime and violence.
3. Reduce costs associated with drug use.
4. Shield America's borders from the drug threat.
5. Break foreign and domestic sources²².

DOD's involvement will revolve principally around goals four and five.

Organization

For counterdrug operations to be efficient and effective, it is necessary for all government agencies to coordinate and synchronize their efforts. This is an extremely complicated process that involves more than 30 U.S. Government agencies involved in the drug war. The principal ones involved in supply and/or demand reduction are the Drug Enforcement Administration, the Customs Service, the Immigration and Naturalization Service, Border Patrol, the Coast Guard, and the Federal Bureau of Investigation. The key support agencies are the Department of Defense, the Federal Aviation Administration, the Department of State, the Intelligence Community, the Internal Revenue Service, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms, the U.S.

Marshals Service, and State and local law enforcement agencies. The Director of the Office of National Drug Control Policy is charged with coordinating and overseeing the implementation of the policies, objectives, and priorities of the various agencies engaged in the war on drugs, in both the international and domestic arenas. It's the agency within the Executive Branch with overall responsibility for the national drug control strategy²³.

Department of Defense Role

In the past, DOD's involvement of the drug war was limited largely to providing equipment to assist law enforcement agencies in their detection and monitoring efforts. This included the loan of fixed-wing aircraft, helicopters, and communications assets. DOD also flew detection missions in support of Federal agencies' drug law enforcement needs²⁴.

The FY 1989 National Defense Authorization Act departed from the past by assigning three primary responsibilities to DOD: to serve as the lead agency for detection and monitoring of the aerial and maritime transit of illegal drugs into the U.S.; to integrate command, control communications, and technical intelligence assets dedicated to drug interdiction into an effective communications network; and to approve and fund State governors' plans for expanded use of the National Guard in support of State drug interdiction and enforcement operations. In response to the first two of these tasks, the JCS initiated land, air and sea surveillance and established a Anti-Drug

Network, the first interoperable communications system for counterdrug activities. In response to the third task, the DOD has allocated additional funds to National Guard (and Reserve) for counterdrug activities²⁵.

Finally, and closer to home for SOF, PL 101-189 provides for DOD's elements to train, in the host country, foreign law enforcement agencies (and other units organized for the specific purpose of narcotics enforcement) in military-related individual and collective skills that will enhance the country's ability to conduct tactical operations in narcotics interdiction²⁶. All such activities are coordinated with the Department of State and other Federal agencies, and with the appropriate CINC.

DOD counterdrug responsibilities are implemented through the unified and specified command structure, and to that end the JCS have assigned to four CINCs -- CINCPAC, CINCPAC, CINCSOUTH, AND CINCNORAD-- the responsibility for operations in their geographic areas. USACOM has delegated to Forces Command (FORSCOM) all counterdrug operational support for CONUS²⁷. CINCPAC, CINCPAC, and CINCFOR have created joint task forces dedicated to the anti-drug surveillance mission: JTF-4 in Key West, Florida, JTF-5 in Alameda, California, and JTF-6 in El Paso, Texas, respectively. CINCSOUTH and CINCNORAD, using their existing organizations, are executing their operations from their command locations in Panama and Colorado Springs, respectively²⁸.

THE ISSUE: SPECIAL OPERATIONS ROLE IN COUNTERNARCOTICS

Authority/ DOD Guidelines

As indicated previously, there is both statutory and DOD authority for the Military Services' participation in the national counterdrug program. The 1988 Anti-Drug Abuse Act, specifically authorized military assistance for anti-narcotics efforts, to include defining the assistance that may be provided (mainly education and training) and earmarking funds for it. This includes providing Mobile Training Teams (MTTs). The 1991 National Defense Authorization Act identified counterdrug funds in the DOD budget and assigned specific responsibilities to DOD. In addition to these authorities, Joint Publication 3-07-4, Doctrine for Joint Counter-Drug Operations identifies illicit narcotics supply reduction as a National Security problem for the United States and clearly identifies the Department of Defense as the lead agent in defending the U.S. from this international threat. Additionally, counterdrug operations are prominently mentioned in numerous joint doctrinal publications to include Joint Pub. 3.0, Doctrine for Joint Operations and Joint Pub. 3.05, Doctrine for Joint Special Operations.

USSOCOM Pub. 1, Special Operation, in Peace and War, identifies counterdrug activities as a specific collateral mission for SOF. Collateral missions are those that will change more frequently due to the shifting international environment.

Factors Affecting Mission Development

Counternarcotics is a relatively new mission area for SOF.

However, if one considers certain key factors in the course of defining SOF's role, this collateral mission can be applied and integrated with all other mission essential tasks and produce significant long term benefit to both the nation and SOF. These factors are:

- Any SOF role must be in consonance with existing SOF doctrine, force structure, capabilities, and equipment. Moreover, any new role must undergo legal/jurisdictional scrutiny to insure that SOF remains within the bounds of military, domestic and/or international law.
- Participation must benefit SOF. That is to say, as roles for SOF are defined, consideration must be given to those that will maximize the return -- in terms of training, readiness, etc. -- to SOF. .
- Counterdrug activities cannot interfere with SOF combat readiness or preparedness for other missions. Indeed, there is evidence to suggest that readiness will be enhanced. Both the spirit and intent of enabling legislation and other directives must be observed. In particular, participation must be in direct support of other U.S. Government or host country agencies as required by their appropriate laws and regulations²⁹.

Forces most likely to succeed in support of host nation agencies are those that are sensitized to the cultural, societal, and

language characteristics of the host nation, and that, at the same time, are used to operating in harsh field environments. Any counterdrug activities within host countries must be in consonance with the counterdrug plans of those countries, and must neither threaten host nation organizations and personnel nor cause them to "lose face" in their own eyes or in the eyes of the populace.

Current Force

The Commander-in-Chief, U.S. Special Operations Command (USCINCSOC), supports theater Commanders by providing trained and ready Special Operations Forces for respective theater requirements. Army Special Operations Forces includes specially outfitted helicopters and aircrews, Special Forces (Green Berets), Rangers, civil affairs and psychological operations personnel. Navy Special Operation Forces include Sea, Air and Land Units, (SEALs, SEAL Delivery vehicle Units and Special Boat Units). Air Force Special Operation Forces includes gunships, penetration aircraft, specially outfitted tankers and helicopters, and uniquely skilled forward air controllers. Added recently is a foreign internal defense training wing. These are the SOF troops who are available and have been helping to fight the flow of drugs both at the source and in-transit into the United States.

Roles and Missions

The principal area in which DOD has provided counterdrug support is in detection, monitoring, and interdiction. Response to U.S. military efforts in this area of the war has been positive but the door remains wide open for innovation and imagination in dealing with the problem. While this is also an excellent mission area for SOF involvement, the most likely area that fits within the existing SOF mission area is that of providing training support to other U.S. law enforcement agencies and to host country counterdrug agencies or forces in eliminating production means in the countries of origin. Thus the counterdrug mission mirrors foreign internal defense and the unconventional warfare mission, both of which maximizes SOF's cross-cultural communication skills, regional orientation and ability to focus training on small-unit operations. Based on a cursory assessment, the following type missions are currently being executed and are considered appropriate roles for SOF in the drug war³⁰.

- Training of host country police and other para-military counterdrug forces by U.S. Army Special Forces in individual and unit military skills to enhance their readiness and tactical capabilities.
- Similar training of U.S. law enforcement personnel who engage in counterdrug operations, and who work with host country personnel in such operations.

- Training of host country police forces by SEALS and Special Boat Squadrons or units in coastal/beach reconnaissance, underwater operations and riverine operations.
- Air operations support of both U.S. and host country law enforcement agencies, using the specialized capabilities inherent in U.S. Air Force Special Operations and U.S. Army Special Operations Aviation aircraft and crews.
- Limited command, control, communications, and intelligence support of host country police/forces, exploiting the capabilities of specialized SOF equipment and procedures.
- PSYOP support of host nation media, to mobilize support against the drug infrastructure and for the government.

Civil affairs and PSYOP support of host country agencies, for example, will assist them in convincing and guiding the populace to produce alternative, economically profitable crops rather than illicit drug crops³¹.

The benefits of this type of training to the Special Operations Community are numerous. For starters, SOF are planning and executing missions similar to those that they perform during wartime, while honing their individual and unit instructional skills. Second, SOF are working to redress a significant SOF -- and Army-wide -- deficiency by enhancing language qualification and fluency while enhancing individual and unit readiness.

A third benefit is working with the Country Team and with forward-deployed SOF, and enhancing their familiarization with prospective areas of operations. This aspect of working in foreign environments is particularly important, especially in view of SOF's regionally focused operational requirements.

Finally, SOF are gaining valuable experience by working with specific host country forces, gathering intelligence, collecting information, and enhancing the reputation of SOF, the U.S. military and the United States. Of particular importance is the fact that SOF Reserve Components are acquiring invaluable, real -world experience that might otherwise not be available³². While SOF represents only a fraction of the military effort that is devoted to this campaign, and while the military contribution is only a fraction of the overall national effort, SOF contributes substantially, nonetheless. To understand this contribution, it is necessary to first understand the warfare mission of SOF as it relates to the counterdrug war.

In one form or another, all of the traditional SOF wartime mission areas are applicable to the counterdrug war with the exception of direct action and counter-terrorism. Essentially, the USSOCOM counterdrug mission is inherent to our seven legislated mission areas. No new mission areas have been created for SOF to conduct counterdrug since the drug war is, by definition, an existing collateral mission. Specific mission areas are routinely used to support the CD campaign, both within the Continental United States and overseas³³.

Within the United States, the most frequently used SOF capabilities are:

a. Listening Post/Observation Posts in isolated terrain and in coastal or river environments.

b. Air support - both for transportation of Drug Law Enforcement Agencies (DLEAs) and for visual reconnaissance. Forward Looking Infrared (FLIR), as permitted by law and policy, is a nighttime enhancement of this mission.

c. Intelligence/linguist support to DLEAs - in conformance with DOD policy, and legal restrictions, SOF does not target U.S. civilians in intelligence gathering.

d. Development of area orientation handbooks.

e. Mobile Training Teams (MITs) to train DLEAs in military skills, communications and medical treatment techniques.

f. Examination of boat and ship hulls for parasite containers³⁴.

The primary SOF capabilities used OCONUS are:

a. Riverine training. Waterways are an important secondary network for drugs and chemicals in the source countries. Navy SOF provides training in small boat operations and river reconnaissance with the focus on improving host nation capabilities to interdict on indigenous waterways.

b. Light infantry training. Host nations use police and military units, some of whom have been trained by SOF, in their drug

war enforcement activities. SOF training focuses on improving the ability of these forces to conduct operational missions against drug trafficking targets.

c. Overt Peacetime Psychological Program/Military Information Support Team assistance and public awareness programs. Education of the host nation populations is basic to winning the fight against cartels.

d. Joint Planning and Assistance Teams assist host national military and civilian law enforcement agencies in developing counterdrug missions and strategy.

e. Advise and train host national forces on techniques required to control operational missions and the communications equipment needed to support these missions. SOF also teaches intelligence gathering techniques and ways to set up intelligence nets³⁵.

SOF involvement in counterdrug activities in the U.S. is in support of Joint Task Force Six, which is oriented primarily along the Southwest Border. JTF-6 coordinates and directs military support to civilian law enforcement agencies, and exercises tactical control of Special Operations units on missions in CONUS. Some of the Law Enforcement Agencies (LEA) SOF has worked in support of include:

- a. Drug Enforcement Administration.
- b. United States Customs Service.
- c. National Park Service.

- d. United States Border Patrol.
- e. Bureau of Land Management.
- f. Numerous state and local LEAs.

In addition to the significant level of support given to JTF-6, USSOCOM is starting to assist Project North Star, a coalition of both U.S. and Canadian LEAs. Project North Star unites 16 states and 10 Canadian provinces sharing common borders in an effort to reduce the flow of drugs across the thousands of miles of unmarked, open U.S./Canadian border³⁶.

USSOCOM rotates a company-sized element of Green Berets, complete with SOF helicopter support, through Fort Bliss, Texas, every 90 days. The "A" teams (12 member detachments) of this unit are available for short-notice tasking by JTF-6 in response to LEA requirements. These rotations are referred to as the Rapid Support Unit or RSU.

The RSU is designed to provide rapid, on-call support to LEAs with information or actionable intelligence on illegal drug-trafficking activities that are imminent. JTF-6 recognizes that an LEA that is operating with perishable information needs DOD support which a "deliberate mission" cannot provide. Some mechanism had to be arranged to provide a more expeditious response. As a result, the RSU concept was quickly developed, coordinated, and fielded. The SF company (ODB or B Detachment) establishes an Advanced Operating Base (AOB) which simultaneously controls isolation procedures, mission and

post mission activities, and the communications of all SFOD-As.

Normally, two or three missions run simultaneously, and about 20 missions are Special Reconnaissance missions which constitute the majority of assistance rendered³⁷.

These missions are designed to increase the "eyes and ears" capability of law enforcement by employing SF personnel along confirmed or suspected drug-trafficking routes. The RSU also conducts ground reconnaissance operations looking for clandestine cannabis cultivation sites. These efforts have been rewarded. In FY95, the RSU found and reported more than 33,000 marijuana plants, 2400 pounds of packaged cocaine and one active laboratory which had produced approximately ten million dollars of methamphetamine³⁸.

These programs all share certain characteristics. First, they are designed, as are the rest of the counterdrug programs, to support national and regional security objectives. All actions are coordinated and approved by the country team where the operation is carried out. They are further approved by the Secretary of Defense and coordinated with the Department of State on a yearly basis.

RESTRICTIONS ON THE USE OF SOF IN THE CD WAR

As with all special operations, whether conducted in peacetime or in war, there are a number of restrictions on how U.S. military forces in general and SOF in particular can be used in counterdrug activities. The most important of these restrictions is the Posse

Comitatus Act. This law prohibits direct law enforcement by active duty military units or personnel. Specifically prohibited by other laws and interpretations of the act are:

- a. arrests.
- b. searches.
- c. seizures.
- d. Pursuit beyond 25 miles.

The legacy and interpretations of both the Posse Comitatus Act and the law mean that the military may not track suspected narcotraffickers beyond 25 miles of the U.S. border if the initial detection took place outside the U.S. border³⁸. Even a known smuggler who crosses the U.S. border cannot be followed by active duty military.

Although the Posse Comitatus Act is specifically oriented to protect U.S. citizens, and applies to operations in CONUS, other policy applications overseas likewise prohibit the use of U.S. military in direct counterdrug field activities OCONUS. The U.S. military, SOF included, may provide assistance to friendly nations, but that assistance cannot be "hands-on" law enforcement action.

USSOCOM supports the sovereignty of host nations and promotes human rights and democracy when working with foreign units. Drug-inspired corruption undermines the will and lawful intent of governments and agencies. At that point, our respect for sovereign

authority impedes all counterdrug efforts in source and transit countries.

MEASURE OF EFFECTIVENESS

In the early period of the national fight against drugs, the "big question" often centered upon whether or not legalization of drugs should be approved.

The destabilizing effects, both of drugs themselves, and in the cartels that produces them, have lead to a new "big question".

Put in plain language, that question centers on "bang for the buck". Bureaucracies call it cost effectiveness. We need to be effective, and efficient, in CD as well as in other undertakings.

The "measure of effectiveness" debate is particularly difficult for the military to answer. As the military itself does not arrest people or confiscate drugs, it must rely on DLEAs to document the "tonnage" interdicted. Since DOD does not have ready access to drug interdiction results, it therefore cannot be responsible for producing traditional measure of effectiveness. For USSOCOM, their own measures of effectiveness have been established which relate directly to their support mission. These measures are:

a. Enhanced U.S. policy through an otherwise unavailable "forward presence"

b. Enhanced professionalism of Host Nation Military/LEA through training and exposure to mature, highly skilled SOF.

c. Repeat business demand for SOF by the Host Nation and DLEA.

D. Mutual respect and esteem, achieved by close working relationships.

E. Identification of SOF as the "Trainers of Choice" by Host Nations/DLEA and CINC's³⁹.

The increasing optempo of USSOCOM in counterdrug operations substantiates the value and desirability of SOF capabilities in the fight against drugs. The force is a low-cost, low-visibility multiplier in the overall national strategy. The combination of language ability, cultural understanding, unique skills and maturity make the Special Operator ideally suited for employment in counterdrug activities.

Significant Contributions

The USSOCOM counterdrug effort has grown from only 5 missions to the U.S. southwest border area, and 12 missions to Southern Command in FY90, to a total of 258 missions in FY96. SOF support to the national counterdrug strategy and increased more than 200%, and the areas in which SOF has directly supported the national strategy now includes PACOM, EUCOM, and most recently, CENTCOM. This counterdrug support effort dynamically responds to the globalized threat presented by narcotraffickers and narcoterrorists. This increased SOF counterdrug support to the war on drugs accounted for nearly 30% of all DOD efforts along the U.S. southwest border area, and 40% of all DOD

support in the Southcom AOR throughout FY92 and FY93. In this period counterdrug funding has also grown proportionally from \$794,000 in FY90 to over \$11 million in FY93. USSOCOM has exercised vision by presenting SOF to theater CINCS and to law enforcement agencies as the "Force of Choice" against drugs at the source, and in transit to the U.S. SOF counterdrug support has provided special reconnaissance, planning/assistance support to major theater counterdrug campaigns plans, and training in military skills to federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies, and to foreign forces which fight the flow of drugs⁴⁰.

Conclusion

"I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us:" Then said I, send me"

Isaiah 6:8

USSOCOM's role of providing counterdrug training, assistance, and operational support to U.S. Ambassadors, host nation forces and other government agencies is of vital importance to U.S. National Interests, supports the U.S. National Security Plan and is directly linked to five of the seven legislated SOF missions. SOF's counterdrug optempo began in 1990 with approximately 25 missions and has continued to rise to over 250 missions in 1996. SOF's support to peacetime engagement missions has become increasingly important especially in view of SOF's regional and cultural orientation, language skills, expert ability to train others in planning and conducting small unit operations and specialized equipment specifically engineered for low-visibility detection and monitoring operations. SOF is unique in that it brings to the table capabilities not readily available in other conventional military units, such as, foreign internal defense, civil affairs and psychological operations. Due to their unique skills, special training, maturity and professionalism, growing appreciation is evident for SOF as the military "force of choice" for support in the war on drugs.

ENDNOTES

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²⁵ Joint Publication 3-07.4, I-10-18.

²⁶ Ibid, B-2.

²⁷ Ibid, I-21.

²⁸ Ibid, III-48.

²⁹ Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, Doctrine for Joint Special Operations, Joint Publication 3-05 (Washington: U.S. Joint Chiefs of Staff, no date given) IV 106.

³⁰ Mr. Bob Agresti, interview by USSOCOM historian, 4 December, 1996, MacDill Air Force Base, Florida.

³¹ Ibid.

³² Ibid.

³³ U.S. Special Operations Command, USSOCOM's Role in Counterdrugs (MacDill Air Force Base, Florida. 21 January, 1997) Briefing.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Ibid.

³⁶ Agresti, interview.

³⁷ U.S. Special Operations Command, The Rapid Support Unit (RSU) (MacDill Air Force Base, Florida. 21 January, 1997) Briefing.

³⁸ Joint Publication 3-07.4, B1-7.

³⁹ USSOCOM Counterdrug Briefing.

⁴⁰ Agresti, interview.

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